

The Family

THREE OLD SAWS.

If the world seems cold to you,
Kindle fires to warm it!
Let their comfort hide from view
Winters that deform it.
Hearts as frozen as your own
To that radiance gather;
You will soon forget to moan,
"Ah! the cheerless weather!"

If the world's a wilderness,
Go build houses in it!
Will it help your loneliness
On the winds to din it?
Raise a hut, however slight;
Weeds and brambles smother;
And to roof and meal invite
Some forlorn brother.

If the world's a vale of tears,
Smile till rainbows span it!
Breathe the love that life endears,
Clear from clouds to fan it.
Of your gladness lend a gleam
Unto souls that shiver;
Show them how dark sorrow's stream
Blends with hope's bright river!

—Lucy Larcom.

ROB'S DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.

By Elizabeth K. Hall.

It began with Hallowe'en; and although that was some days ago, the trouble still rankled.

It was the custom of the boys of Clinton to make that evening a terror to all law-abiding citizens. Not that it was noisy. Oh, no! Quietly and stealthily did they unhinge gates, detach door-bells, change signs and shower beans upon the windows of inoffensive people.

Rob's mother refused to allow him to take part in such vandalism, and teasing failed to move her.

Ruth proposed Hallowe'en tricks in the house; and Aunt Kate even held out the tempting bait of ice cream afterwards. But even that failed to console Rob; and he openly sulked. He had not been his usual bright self since, and had really begun to believe himself hardly treated. Too much was demanded of him. Privileges were too few.

Finally came the Declaration of Independence.

He wrote it in the study, with Father's pet stub pen, on the largest sheet of paper he could find. It was the Saturday Father and Mother had gone to the city for the day.

When it was fairly put in black and white (largely black, for blots and erasures were plenty), it was carefully pinned up in the hall where all might see and take warning.

This is the way it read:

"To all whom it may concern; be it resolved; to wit; namely:" (Rob had found these terms on various documents in Father's desk, and concluded to put them all in.) "I, John Robinson Gray, do declare:

"1st. I won't run so many errands.

"2nd. I'll sit up till nine o'clock whenever I want to.

"3rd. I'll be late to skule if I choose and I don't care what any old teechur says."

Ruth, skipping down stairs for her piano practice was the first to see and read with amazement.

"Robin Gray! You'll never let Father and Mother see that?"

"Course," responded the young rebel with dignity.

"I'd be ashamed. And I guess you'll be so before bedtime."

With these mysterious words Ruth turned into the parlor; only looking back to say:

"And I'd learn to spell before I made up such a paper as that."

Rob glared at the parlor door for a moment; and then marching up to the paper, added:

"4th. I'll spell wurd's jest as I've a mind to."

He did feel rather queer when he saw Aunt Kate pause and read it through seriously. But she only remarked:

"I suppose it's no use, Rob, to ask you to go to the grocery and get some powdered sugar for Bridget?"

Now, although you would hardly suspect it, Rob was really the most accommodating boy in the world, and the first impulse now was to run for his "bike." But to be consistent he felt obliged to walk upstairs, saying, "I'm busy now," at the bottom of his heart feeling very much ashamed of himself.

He heard Bridget say: "An whatever has come over the boy, and him always so obligin'. Sure an' how am I going to make his"—

"Hush! Hush!" came Aunt Kate's voice. "What were they going to make that was his, he wondered.

Altogether it was not a very happy Saturday morning, for Aunt Kate was invisible, Ruth looked at him as if he had done something dreadful, and Bridget was as cross as two sticks.

After the noon dinner, Aunt Kate casually remarked:

"Mother thought you had better put on your Sunday suit this afternoon, Rob; we may have company to supper."

Now if there was one thing Rob usually objected to more than all others it was being "dressed up"; and I fear there would have been a fifth added to the Declaration had his aunt put it in any other way; but "Mother thought you had better" carried the day; and three o'clock found both children descending the stairs in spick and span attire, Ruth full of suppressed excitement, and Rob grumbling:

"I don't see why Aunt Kate wanted us ready so early."

A peal of the doorbell was the response; and in danced Doris, their next-door neighbor and dearest friend. Running directly to Rob, she cried:

"I've come to your party, Rob. Am I the first?"

"My party? The first?" repeated Rob in a dazed way; and then Aunt Kate came laughing to the rescue and said:

"Doris has given away our surprise, but only a little before you would have

known it. The others will be here in half an hour. And, Rob, here is a note Mother left for you."

Bob took it and read:

"My darling boy: I'm sorry I can't be at the party; but Aunt Kate is quite equal to managing it alone, and today seemed the best for all the boys and girls. I hope you will have a lovely time. I do enjoy giving my boy pleasure more than depriving him of it; and he is usually so helpful to us all, and minds so well what is told him that I think he deserves a little recognition of it once in a while.

"Yours lovingly,

"Mother."

As Rob raised his eyes after reading, Aunt Kate and the girls looked far off and in a mist. The only thing that stood out distinctly was that horrid paper staring him in the face.

In a second he had torn it from the wall, and running into the living-room, where a fire blazed on the hearth, he pushed it under the logs. The girls watched with interest while Rob vigorously blew the bellows, and very soon the Declaration of Independence was nothing but ashes.

And then—as Rob expressed it when telling the story afterwards—"the party came in."—The Congregationalist.

SEEKING AND FINDING.

A mission had just been held in a small country parish. It had been noticed that a young man, a farm servant, had before that begun to come occasionally to the parish prayer meeting, which was held weekly, and to a Sunday Bible class for men. After the end of this mission, he came more regularly, but so far no one had spoken to him. One evening, when the prayer meeting was over, the lady in whose house it was held stopped him for a talk.

"How long have you cared about these things?" she questioned. "I've been hunting for eternal life for a long time," was his response. "And have you found it?" "Yes," was the unhesitating reply. "When?" "On the third of December." "Where?" "Here—no, not here—in my room at the farm." "What led you to it?" "It was Mrs. E. saying, 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?' " "And what made you begin to hunt for eternal life?" "It was two years ago; I went into a chapel, and the preacher said he was saved, and I thought if he knew it, why shouldn't I know it, too? But I was not enough in real earnest about it, I expect, and I hadn't faith."

Is not that the secret of so many hunting apparently in vain for eternal life? They are not enough in earnest about it. Each of us needs to have a "third of December" of our own—a day on which we come to a definite decision to accept the gift of God, which "is eternal life." We, too, may "know that we have eternal life" (see 1 John 5:13). Why not today?—M. B., in "Service for the King."

Don't bother to forgive your supposed enemies—just forget them.